

HOW CLASSES STRUGGLE

Weakening of Property Ideas

The workers and capitalists are not, in fact, *constituted* as classes except ideally, or abstractly. That is to say, they are not two sealed-off groups united internally for the purpose of carrying out agreed upon policies against each other.

The workers do not organise together to oppose the capitalists as a class. If their ideas had reached this point they would abolish Capitalism. What happens is that in detail disputes some sections oppose their employers whilst other sections are not in favour of this opposition. When bus workers strike for higher wages other workers complain bitterly that this action is responsible for the increase in fares. There is similar opposition to strike action by railwaymen. When coal-miners strike other sections, including busmen and railwaymen, complain that this action brings about a shortage of coal and an increase in its price. A strike of those who handle meat brings forth similar opposition. One union fights another which it claims is poaching on its territory. Some sections resist the entrance of workers into their particular industry, i.e. opposition to Italian workers in pits, limitations on the enrolment of apprentices, etc. Fundamentally each section fights in defence of its own particular group, not only against the employers but also against all other workers who appear to them to interfere with the accomplishment of their own narrow objective—improvement in the wages and conditions of their own particular section.

Solidarity of the workers as a class is at the moment a myth. Only the understanding of Socialism will convert the myth into a fact.

Finally the vast mass of the workers vote for the continuation of capitalist property relationships, and a large proportion of them vote for avowed capitalist candidates.

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The capitalists do not organise together to

oppose the workers as a class. Even the various employers' federations and chambers of commerce are not organised for this specific purpose. Capitalists fight each other bitterly, nationally and internationally, for shares of the surplus wealth produced by the workers. Each in his particular section opposes claims for higher pay made by the workers in their own particular industry. They have no objection to workers in other industries getting higher pay unless they think this will have an adverse effect on their own particular industry. In fact, at times, they will support claims for higher pay if they think their own industry will be able to score over a competitor. They are split over particular wage claims, particular reforms, and particular wars, because they, like the workers, do not understand the present social system and do not believe that they are living on the surplus wealth produced by the workers.

Workers and capitalists accept the property system. The state came into existence to defend the property system, and when Capitalism became the established social system the state became the defender of this particular kind of property-relationship; its actions are designed to further the interests of Capitalism and therefore of the capitalists.

Workers and capitalists are alike filled with muddled ideas and share similar prejudices on nationality, race, sex and so forth.

BUT

In spite of certain common prejudices and sectional antagonisms there is a class division in society which marks off capitalist from worker and breeds an over-riding antagonism of interests between these two classes within present society, despite the fact that this is not recognised on fundamental questions. Thus:

1. A proposal for a rise in wages in an industry does provoke opposite *immediate* reactions in the breast of capitalist and workers, even though later reflection and propaganda may induce a common outlook in favour or against the proposal.
2. In general the worker is out for increases in pay; in general the capitalist is opposed to them.
3. The capitalists have vital interests at stake in prosecuting a war; the workers have not.
4. The question of property ownership appears as a more vital one to the capitalist than to the worker, even though the latter accepts the idea, and therefore proposals to abolish this form bring forth more strenuous

opposition from the capitalist than from the worker. The abolition of insecurity has greater appeal to the worker than to the capitalist.

Against this latter point may be set a general weakening in the ideas tied up with property-ownership which has been provoked by social development during this century, including the mass destruction of property during wars, the changing personnel of the owners and the movement from direct ownership of industries to ownership through share and bond-holding. Property ownership, in the narrow sense, no longer has the universal hold upon peoples' minds that it had 100 years ago. Ideas are changing. The general feeling of insecurity which world wars have disseminated has helped in this process.

Finally, however, whilst the propaganda for Socialism is aimed at all the members of society, as we are out for a change that involves the co-operation of everybody, its appeal will be felt more directly by the workers; they have a more immediate interest

in the change as the present social organisation bears heavily upon them, and the new social form promises the removal of miseries that they constantly suffer.

Capitalism will not evolve gradually into Socialism, up to the moment of establishing the new system Capitalism will retain all its main features—private property, commodity production, the wages system, the State.

The establishment of Socialism will be a sudden basic change, involving the abolition of property. In the meantime ideas will evolve and the ideas of the mass of people will develop until they reach a socialist outlook. The ideas of the mass of people progress at about the same rate; similarity in world experience and intercommunications brings the laggards up to the general level.

Here and there a relatively small number get ahead of the mass for a time, owing to favourable individual circumstances, and form groups to propagate their ideas, but the mass catch up at an accelerated rate as time passes owing to the mutual exchange of ideas based upon a fundamental similarity in mental operations.

GILMAC

CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE S.P.G.B. (2)

The One and Only Way

"If the S.P.G.B. is a hater of all classes—which is quite incorrect; we hate capitalist class society—then surely of the two we have infinitely more reason to hate the capitalist class most, which concerns itself very much with the perpetuation of the present system, as witness the incredibly huge sums spent in apologising and eulogising Capitalism. Everything that is conceivably possible is done to obscure the murderous and anti-social nature of *their* system. It is no argument to say that the workers also defend this system, for we know from our historical approach that the enslaved class always follows the ideas of its masters and rulers, and no socialist in his proper senses would argue that the contrary was the truth." —"Canvassing In Park Lane", (FORUM, Jan. 1954)

This second article is an attempt to expand some of the ideas in my first one (Dec. 1953), and is not intended to deal with the whole of Judd's criticism. The above extract has been selected as being typical of the general criticism that my first article evoked.

At first sight, the paragraph appears to be quite in order and a fair example of what is considered to be "the Party's case". But on closer inspection several anomalies become apparent.

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1. What reasoning brings the S.P.G.B. to hate one class more than the other when neither class has Socialism as its interest? The struggle between classes is NOT one for Socialism, despite the fact that the D. of P. implies that the working class must be the class that will eventually establish it. Neither the worker nor the capitalist recognises their struggle as such—neither do I. So here are two different struggles: two classes wanting to maintain or improve their

conditions within Capitalism, and socialists wanting Socialism. Because we hold that the workers must bring about Socialism, that does not make their struggle against the capitalists a socialist one.

2. Hatred in propaganda can be used to good effect provided it is used in its correct place. But what is its correct place in socialist propaganda? We have at least established our common hatred of Capitalism as a system of society. Is it possible to make that hatred a tactical one in the furthering of our object? I think not.

The hatred expressed by Judd I accept as a sincere reaction to an opposing class from his own aspect of society. It is, in fact, quite commonly held by Party members and many factions of the so-called "Left Wing". Nevertheless, from the point of view of socialist propaganda, it makes a secondary issue of the socialist's detestation of the system by focussing hatred on the capitalist class. The Anarchists, Communist Party, I.L.P., and the "Left Wing" generally, do much the same thing—some go a little further by pinpointing certain capitalists. In my opinion the socialist cry should be "Down With Capitalism" not "Down With The Capitalist Class". But do not jump to the illogical conclusion that if you don't say "Down With The Capitalist Class" then that is the same as saying "Up With The Capitalist Class". It isn't.

Ironically, whilst the S.P.G.B. professes sympathy for the workers, it is they who take on the task of supplying the means and

devising the content of the propaganda that is intended to gloss this night-marish system. Workers study for years at colleges to get these jobs. Far from always following the ideas of their masters, they are very often ahead of them! Surely Judd is not so naive as to believe that *capitalists* are the brains behind capitalist propaganda? No, of course he isn't—because elsewhere he refers to them as "useless" and "more-than-usually absent".

To demonstrate further that this type of hatred is not calculated to advance the cause of Socialism, if "apologising and eulogising" is typical of the capitalist class, it follows that we must condemn those workers who do that type of work for being "anti-working class". And I think that many members *do* take that view. But then so do the Anarchists who condemn prison warders and the like, the Communists who condemn Imperialist soldiers, sailors and policemen (except "Red" ones!). These parties and other groups of the "Left Wing" adopt these tactics, completely ignoring the fact that ALL workers are assisting their masters to live in luxury or relative ease, no matter what job they do.

Some members are very keen to denounce various facets of Capitalism as "anti-working class", yet appear unconcerned about explaining the socialist alternative. In what way is such propaganda distinguished from that of "Left Wing" organisations generally except by virtue of its object?

No, hatred in our propaganda must be a general hatred of the whole system, and perhaps it will be more to the point when the S.P.G.B. has something to say about Socialism in comparison with present society. Only then shall we be able to say that the S.P.G.B. stands truly in great distinction from all other parties and political factions.

AN APPEAL

for funds to assist; the S.P. of Ireland to send fraternal delegates to Annual Conference. Please send contributions to Kingston Branch Secretary.

3. From what facts can it be argued that a system of society belongs to one class of that society, i.e. "their system" (meaning, in this case, the system of the capitalist class)? The S.P.G.B. calls for a speedy termination to be wrought to THE system. Capitalism remains in existence whilst the people therein carry out those activities that enable it to continue, i.e. are in line with its basic structure. That the capitalist class derives the greater benefit from those activities is, in the final analysis, by the leave of the rest of society. Only in that subjective way can it be termed *their* system, just as we say "every dog has his day". To give that phrase any other application or connotation would imply that the workers have another system which is *theirs*.

Quite naturally the capitalists do all in their power, *which is bestowed upon them*, to maintain property relationships. Why be surprised if exercising that power means rapacity, arrogance and brutality? Is it not typical of the whole system? These "qualities" not only manifest themselves in the master-worker struggle, but also in master-master struggles, not to mention the atrocities that workers perpetrate against each other.

IMPORTANT

Only articles and correspondence received by Feb. 9th can be considered for publication in the March issue.

Capitalism is NOT the property of the capitalist class—it is the sum total of the activities of the whole of society. And the sooner members realise that the position of the S.P.G.B. is in opposition to the LOT, the sooner will we make real headway.

4 Therefore it is a very forceful argument to say that "workers also defend this system"—they *do* have the ideas of their masters, because predominantly both have the same idea: self-interest and the seeking of power and privilege at the expense of other individuals and groups. In his first sentence Judd quite rightly attacks the capitalist class for "apologising and eulogising" Capitalism and for being concerned with its perpetuation. But in his last sentence he apologises for (and almost eulogises) the working class for doing the same thing!

It is no function of the S.P.G.B. to instruct people (workers) as to their best method of obtaining more wealth, any more than it is to tell capitalists how to break strikes and obtain more profit. Our sole function stands out clearly, at least to me. We must put over only that type of propaganda that will assist directly in the achievement of our object—Socialism.

In all, I think that the tendency in our propaganda to depict one class in society as "vicious" and the other as "virtuous" puts the class struggle in an entirely false light—it destroys the whole concept that the socialist is trying to put across. I view it as a half-hearted attempt to curry favour with the so-called "under-dog". But people in general do not see themselves in that light. The worker who considers himself even moderately intelligent takes great exception to the idea that, by comparison with his employer, he is a degraded and defenceless being. It is no way to approach a person with whom you wish to hold a serious discussion by insisting that, in his present state, he is for all practical purposes a moron.

To listen to members putting "the case" from the platform, and trying to put it as though it were a domestic issue within the working class, only serves to increase the impression of what I have come to regard as a diversity of purpose within the Party. Socialism, as I see it, is solely a socialist party issue—it only concerns the working class in that we have yet to gain the support of the overwhelming majority of society. There is a difference between making socialists and merely making people conscious that there are two classes in capitalist society.

The S.P.G.B. has only one case and therefore only one "face", which it should, and must present to anybody and everybody. We should not have one attitude to workers and another to non-workers (capitalists). We have one thing to say—the case for Socialism. They must like it or lump it, and if they choose to do the latter we must not imagine that we will get anywhere by changing the subject. We thoroughly hate the system that belongs to *all of them*. We think we know of a better one, and we are prepared to argue about it and to defend what we say. We can show how and why it will be superior to any other system hitherto known to man. And that means a lot of hard work in building up the part of our case that has been badly neglected—*what it is that we want*.

Merely criticising Capitalism does not postulate Socialism—it merely criticises what has been criticised *ad infinitum*, adding another voice to the general moan "when is something going to be done for the workers?" Socialism is a proposal to do the best that can be done for workers and for all people—the ending of class society by the introduction of one in the interest of the whole community. That is our case and we have to prove it. We can only speak for our-

selves and cannot represent anybody but socialists. Everybody else has yet to be won over, and our object demands that we work on the assumption that they can be won over.

The working class does not recognise the S.P.G.B. as its champion because the working class is not a united body, but a category of people with a wide diversity of economic interests. But when they are socialists it is different, for **WITHIN THE S.P.G.B. ALL SUCH CLASSIFICATIONS VANISH**. Therefore, whatever we have to say should have a direct appeal to anyone who is within earshot or is able to read literature, no matter who he is, worker or capitalist, prince or prostitute, black or white, Christian or atheist. Our case for Socialism must stand on its own merit, and not on behalf of any class or section of society. It is the one and only way.

A.A.N.

Correspondence and articles should be sent to **FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W. 4**. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to **E. Lake, S.P.G.B.**

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors.

Comrades,

We are always looking for new avenues of socialist propaganda. This is a good thing. But I think we should concentrate more on the existing methods.

One good method of propaganda is the local press. If writers of letters to the local papers keep their letters brief and put their case in a "moderate" way, most editors will accept them. A good tactic is to start a controversy with another correspondent—a Tory, a Catholic, Communist, etc.

Small branches should elect one press correspondent; larger branches should form a press committee, each member buying a different paper.

Having regularly written in one local newspaper for about three years, and having received sympathetic remarks from numerous neighbours, I consider this form of propaganda extremely useful.

Yours fraternally,

PETER E. NEWELL.

EDITORIAL

In this issue of FORUM we publish an article from Comrade D. W. Lock, of Lewisham Branch, under the heading "Revisionism and Renegades in the S.P.G.B.". We quote from this article:

"There is a rotten spirit making itself in the Party today . . . It arises from the fact that there are individuals in the Party who are opposed to the D. of P. and who hold opinions which are incompatible with membership of the Party . . .

The Party is beginning to smell—it is like a cancerous growth in the Party, which unless rooted out, will pollute the name of the S.P.G.B. and make it stink in the nostrils of class conscious workers."

There are several aspects of this article which we think are objectionable.

1. The language is emotionally abusive and without argument.
2. It makes serious charges without any attempt to substantiate them.
3. It strongly suggests that FORUM publishes the views of the "renegades" who would have no journal to publish their views if they got out of the Party.

In regard to (1) we would say that there is no objection to emotional language when it is the yeast of argument. In this case it is just abuse.

Of (2) that charges made against members and branches of the Party unsupported with evidence are not compatible with the traditional attitude of the S.P.G.B.

And (3) that whilst some of the views expressed in these columns have occasionally left the editors of FORUM somewhat bemused about their meanings, it must, with due regard to our fallibility, be said that nothing which has appeared so far could lead us to assert that within the Party there are those "who hold opinions which are incompatible with membership of the Party".

We assure Comrade Lock that we have as yet detected no cancerous smells likely to pollute the name of the S.P.G.B. Perhaps this is because the sense of smell makes so small a contribution to socialists thought. We suggest that Comrade Lock gives his sense of sight a little exercise and reads what Party members have written, and with the aid of his sense of touch put into writing for the benefit of all of us the facts which lead him

(continued next column)

REVISIONISM AND RENEGADES IN THE S.P.G.B.

There is a rotten spirit making itself felt in the Party today. Many members have been uneasy for some time, and the number who think that matters must be brought to a head is growing. It arises from the fact that there are individuals in the Party who are opposed to the D. of P. and who hold opinions which are incompatible with membership of the Party. We have had differences of opinion in the past, but to my knowledge not on such fundamental aspects of the Socialist Party's case.

In the past, when a few individuals disagreed with some aspect of the party's case it has been assumed that they would in the course of time get out. They usually did: action has been taken against members on very few occasions. Now, however, we have individuals in the Party who not only disagree with much of the D. of P. but also have not the honesty to resign. This is becoming unbearable. The Party is beginning to smell—it is like a cancerous growth in the Party which, unless rooted out, will pollute the name of the S.P.G.B. and make it stink in the nostrils of all class-conscious workers.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE S.P.G.B

As is known, the Party was founded by a group of Socialists in 1904 who were dissatisfied with the existing policy of the S.D.F. After the expulsion of J. Fitzgerald and H. J. Hawkins, a Protest Committee was formed which issued a leaflet setting forth the grounds of dissatisfaction. The signatories to the leaflet urged "the adoption of an uncompromising attitude which admits of no arrangements with any section of the capitalist party; nor permits any compromise with any individual or party

to make the accusation that there are "individuals in the Party who are opposed to the Declaration of Principles" and who have differences with the Party on "fundamental aspects of the Party's case". If this work leaves him with time to spare, the open forums held every Saturday evening at Clapham would bring his sense of hearing into vibrant activity.

not recognising the class war as a basic principle, and not prepared to work for the overthrow of the present, capitalist system. Opposition to all who are not openly and avowedly working for the realisation of Social Democracy". Such was the position put forward by those who eventually founded the S.P.G.B.

The Socialist Party and the trade unions have a common origin in the class struggle. The former is the organised expression on the political field of the conscious recognition of that struggle by the workers.

The test of admission to the S.P.G.B. can be nothing less than acceptance of the essential working principles and policy of Socialism as a class movement—hence rule 1 of the Party.

Those individuals who are opposed to the class struggle and are members of the Party must have signed form A, signifying their acceptance of these principles. Either they were dishonest when they joined the S.P.G.B. and their signature on form A meant nothing to them (in which case the branch which admitted them must take some of the blame) or they are renegades who, although no longer accepting the principles and policy they originally agreed with, remain in the Party.

The reason for the latter is obvious—outside the Party they would have no journal to publish their views, no platform from which to propagate their revisionist theories.

The issue is purely one of principle: is the struggle to be conducted as a class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie or not? I consider it is time to throw down the gauntlet to this adulterating element. Either the branch to which they belong must challenge them that their views are incompatible with membership of the Party; or, if their branch supports them, action must be taken against the branch.

Class interest is paramount. Growing out of the class struggle, our Party rests upon the class struggle as a condition of its existence. Whoever fails to understand this or thinks that the class struggle is a dead issue, or that class antagonisms are being gradually effaced, stands upon the basis of bourgeois philosophy.

D. W. LOCK.

A WORKING CLASS PARTY

— Or a Party Working For Socialism?

In order to clarify my position on this issue I have chosen to present my views in the form of a series of propositions, rather than in the more usual essay form. This will better enable critics to deal with my arguments, and will also assist me to avoid using language which might obscure the arguments.

The following propositions cover the basic disagreements I have with some members. If these differences can be resolved we can then approach the question of the description of Socialism in terms of our present knowledge.

1. Socialism is in the interest of every human being throughout the entire world.

2. Socialism means the social equality of humanity, that is, no one seeking power or privilege over others nor supporting institutions based on power or privilege.

3. In all forms of property society the economic classes and social groupings into which people are divided are mutually antagonistic, e.g. worker v. capitalist, nation v. nation, male v. female.

4. In capitalist society people are, broadly speaking, divided into two economic classes—the working class and the capitalist class.

5. The economic interests of the working class are opposed to the economic interests of the capitalists class.

6. "WORKING CLASS INTERESTS" means economic interests of the working class

"CAPITALIST CLASS INTERESTS" means economic interests of the capitalist class.

7. "GROUP INTERESTS" means the interests peculiar to social groups of people seeking privileges and power over other groups, i.e. national, racial, religious, income groups, etc.

8. No class or group interests can be equated with social interests, i.e. the interests of all mankind.

9. Socialism alone, as a system of society or way of life, can give complete expression to social interests.

10. Since all class or group interests are mutually antagonistic, all class or group interests must be opposed to *human interests*, i.e. to Socialism.

11. A SOCIALIST PARTY comprises people possessing socialist ideas and seeks to achieve Socialism. It is not an economic unit.

12. A socialist party is not a class or group party; it is not a capitalist class party nor is it a working class party.

13. The division of humanity into classes and groups struggling for privilege and power is due to the existence of property and property institutions.

14. A socialist party does not appeal to any class or group as such. It appeals to *mankind*, not to capitalists, nor to wage-workers, nor to nations, nor races, nor families, nor income groups.

15. A socialist party makes a direct appeal to all human being to think and act, as far as they can today, as equals and to join with other socialists to spread the ideas to all men and women so that Socialism can be established.

16. SOCIALISM, being in the interests of all human beings, can only be established by methods which are in harmony with human interests.

17. Since coercion is power-and privilege-seeking, Socialism precludes the use of all forms of coercion, e.g. war, violence, lying and withholding information.

18. Socialism can only be brought about by the mass of mankind thinking and acting as equals. Only socialists can think consistently as equals, and only socialists are opposed to all power-and privilege-seeking groups.

19. THE STATE or governmental machinery, including the armed forces, exists in property society. All economic classes and social groups seeking power and privilege aim at controlling this machinery or influencing those in control so as to further their class or group interests.

20. A socialist party cannot aim at gaining control of the governmental machinery. A socialist party relies upon the socialist understanding of the mass of people—it cannot rely upon law and armed force to establish or maintain Socialism.

21. Socialists must explain why society is divided into classes and groups seeking privilege and power. They must explain the SOCIAL reasons for men's behaviour.

22. Socialists oppose all anti-social thinking and action.

23. Socialists do not talk, or write about, or organise for, Socialism as capitalists or workers, as black or white people, or on the basis of sex, but as human beings understanding and wanting Socialism.

24. We cannot salute people with "Fellow Workers" for we do not speak or write as workers but as socialists. We cannot say "Fellow Capitalists", "Fellow Countrymen", "Fellow Jews", etc.

25. Socialists can only advocate Socialism no matter the country they may be in or the conditions they may live under. For socialists to advocate any other system of society or way of life would mean their relinquishing any claim to the title of Socialist.

TURNER.

BOUND COPIES

A few more orders can be taken for bound copies of the first 15 issues of FORUM up to Dec. 1953. Earlier, the price was quoted as 7/6d, but this did not take into account the cost of materials for binding. Buyers have therefore been asked to pay 10/- for these copies, inclusive of postage.

Those members who still have a copy of FORUM no 1 (Oct. 1952) are invited to send 9/6d. to the Literature Secretary at Head Office for a bound copy exactly as above, but without the oversize no. 1, which in all cases is inserted in a pocket and is detachable.

SOCIALISM, UTOPIAN AND PHILOSOPHICAL

Reply to A.A.N.

The art of erecting straw houses and knocking them over has not been ignored by A.A.N., in his contribution to the current confusion entitled 'Class struggle and the S.P.G.B.' (Dec. 1953). In general the article is riddled with ambiguity, misstatements, and complete lack of definition of all the expressions used. Also the vague and unsatisfactory way and phraseology in which the arguments are presented, make criticism extremely difficult. That is, unsatisfactory from the point of rendering and inviting criticism, which must be assumed is the object of the writer.

The most glaring example of this is the use of the words 'class struggle', the first casualty in this philosophical morass. No definition is attempted and the reader is left with the mistaken impression that the class struggle is merely a Trade Union issue. A.A.N. should have spared us this speculation and stated clearly what he meant.

Before dealing with the principal criticisms it is advisable to point out that A.A.N. has not put the Party case but has in fact put something entirely different. A criticism of the Party case, or any aspect of it, must have its basis in the Party's existing propaganda, written and spoken, and which is accepted by the Party as a whole, not certain individuals. It is not good enough to use vague and abstract phrases about the Party being opposed to the capitalist class, or even

in favour of the working class, nor is it good enough to make the sweeping claim that more often than not people are confused when they hear our propaganda. The Party's case is concrete enough, and criticisms of it should be clear, and not buried in a jungle of philosophical jargon or verbal clichés, all negative in character.

The opening lines of the article begin with the statement "this article is an attempt to show that the S.P.G.B. as a Party of propagandists, who are trying to enlist the aid of the whole of mankind to change the basis of present society, should in its propaganda not participate in the class struggle!"

The S.P.G.B., are not, nor ever have been, trying to enlist the aid of the whole of mankind. The Party's case is that the working class in a majority must agree to the proposals submitted by us for the abolition of Capitalism. This is an entirely different proposition. If we take A.A.N.'s statement at its face value, it would mean that unless we were successful in enlisting the aid of the whole of mankind, Socialism could not be established. Alternatively, so long as a minority of capitalists, or workers, do not want Socialism, we cannot have it. This would also apply to those portions of the world population who are not members of the working class—Tibetan Llamas, primitive tribes in Central Africa, Aborigines, Hottentots, and the like. This does not detract from the basic Party position that all people, given similar economic circumstances, can understand Socialism; the point is, do they all have to as A.A.N. claims?

The latter part of the sentence about the Party and its propaganda not participating in the class struggle, betrays A.A.N.'s ignorance of what the class struggle really is. Marx made the famous statement that 'All history was the history of class struggles'. Is it A.A.N.'s position that he is opposed to history and to historical process? That is, of course, if he agrees with Marx's statement.

The issue in the class struggle is one of property, either in degree (Trade Unions) or as a whole (common ownership). The position could be summarised as private

property versus common property, with Socialists advocating the latter. Participation in the class struggle is indispensable to the Socialist idea. When we analyse the Capitalist nature of society, and present that analysis in the form of propaganda, we are participating in the class struggle, as we are actively seeking to dispossess the present owners. We are the only Party who do this, Labour, Communist, I.L.P., Trotskyists, etc., have not analysed Capitalism accurately or adequately—that is our criticism of them. A.A.N.'s references to the Party being opposed to the Capitalist class is a dangerous half-truth, and leaves the impression that we are opposed to individuals. Surely little clarity is needed when we state the interest of the capitalist and working class are diametrically opposed over the product of labour (property).

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Paragraph 3 is a typical example of word-spinning, and, quite frankly, A.A.N. is very confused. 'Do we not deplore the fact that class struggle is inevitable under Capitalism and desire to end it? Why then do we insist in our propaganda that we represent the true interests of the workers as a class?'

This is real Jimmy Jesus morality, which starts off in the middle. In point of fact we do not deplore anything—we actively oppose the property division in Society which is the basis of class antagonisms. We cannot oppose class antagonisms any more than we can oppose the law of Gravity or any more than Canute could keep back the waves. When we discuss the 'true interests' of the Working class we mean common ownership as opposed to private ownership—could anything be clearer? Socialism means the emancipation of the Working class economically; Capitalists are already economically emancipated, therefore common ownership for them is, at best, an academic issue instead of a dire necessity. In any event, Capitalists who are in favour of Socialism automatically identify themselves with Working class interests. If there is to be any foundation in the argument, we must use the word 'interests' economically, that is from the Party's point of view, as we are

VIOLENCE

"The dangers of violence that threaten us come not from the heads of individuals but from social circumstances. Murder is an embolus. The disease lies elsewhere. It is not a matter of episodic violence, but of a continuous violation of the principle of the dignity and value of human life. Actually in our society respect for human life is only a professed theoretical ideal. We must vigorously remove the obstacles that prevent it from becoming a practical reality."

—F. Wertham in "The Show of Violence", p. 266.

at the receiving end of A.A.N.'s criticism.

In Paragraph 4 he informs us "It is patently clear that the true interests of anybody within Capitalism are to acquire property". Perhaps A.A.N. will inform us in a later article which particular set of true interests we have to consider, those in Paragraph 3 or Paragraph 4, as it seems that we now have two versions of 'true interests'. He claims in effect that the majority of people think their problems can be solved under Capitalism. A.A.N. is probably right in thinking that people think this, but the simple position is that the majority of people, in spite of their desires to obtain property under Capitalism, are propertyless and will remain so.

If workers hold the illusion that their desires can be realised under Capitalism we must dispel it, and their alleged 'true interests' with it.

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The most serious criticism contained in A.A.N.'s article is that the Party's propaganda over 50 years does not make Socialists, hence the need to alter it. Viz: "Does our propaganda at present receive this response from people? The record of our achievement shows that it does not." Which means precisely that we are not a Socialist Party, as means and end are inseparable: wrong means wrong end. It is possible of course that A.A.N. will disagree with the logic of the position that he has taken up, and grant us a concession or two; for example our contribution to scientific Socialism in the shape of numerous pamphlets

we have published. The existence of a few thousand people, some time members of the S.P.G.B., including A.A.N., who, at any rate, call themselves Socialists.

The existing propaganda has converted a few thousand, why not a few million? Or is it A.A.N.'s view that we in the S.P.G.B. are a special breed, or a collection of freaks? What was good enough to bring us in is apparently not good enough for people generally. It is not a question of improving that which is wrong to begin with, that is, if A.A.N.'s criticism is correct. The present writer sees nothing wrong in the existing propaganda apart from its volume and ill-informed propagandists who reduce the case to a catechism instead of making it a virile and living force, scientific and emotional. To interpolate here on the question of scientific and emotional, has A.A.N. ever read Marx's description of the condition of English agricultural and factory workers in the early 19th century (Capital volume 1), the Civil War in France, Engels on the condition of the working classes in 1844? All scientific works, but not devoid of human feeling or emotion.

A.A.N. thinks he has tied us up in a verbal strait-jacket and is disgusted with our scientific approach to the real world because he claims it lacks emotion, or rather, that we are afraid of being unscientific. This is one of the reasons, he claims, that we refuse to formulate a policy on Socialism and what it will look like. The majority of members are on more than nodding terms with this phantom, and are waiting patiently

for the formulators to take the initiative. The Party has never done this for the simple reason that it cannot be done, *there is nothing to know*. When Socialism is established nobody will know what it will look like, neither will anyone care apart from some S.P.G.B.'ers. We shall certainly have some information on production, technically; big communities, small communities; nymphs & shepherds; not to forget our old friend Sex. We could, of course, speculate and be wrong, but to gain favour with A.A.N. what would it matter as long as we were emotionally wrong.

It is significant that only Socialists argue what Socialism will look like—only Socialists can. The present writer hasn't a clue, like millions of others; he will accept the insurance policies of democratic control and common ownership, which is all the Party offers, and with these two ingredients re-create the world.

A.A.N. finally threatens us with hell-fire if we don't mend our ways and include the Capitalists, as if we could exclude the Capitalists from Socialism. They will have it whether they like it or not.

A.A.N. can't see the wood for the trees. His cardinal error is to separate Socialism and the struggle for Socialism (the class struggle). The conquest drenching we have had of words and conclusions drawn from illogical premises is a direct result of this. It seems rather a long winded way of opposing the Party's attitude to Trade Unions and clause 6 of our Declaration of Principles.

J. D'ARCY.

PROBLEMS OF PROPAGANDA — 3

The Written Word

Written propaganda is used by the Party to establish and explain its attitude on all matters connected with its principles and policy. In its long-term aspect, it is the accumulation of a reference library; from month to month it is the *Socialist Standard* giving its views on more or less topical subjects, "looking at world events through socialist eyes".

The S.S. is faced with the same problem as Party speakers—who are we addressing and what are we trying to get across to them? Officially it is "a propaganda organ

to convince workers of the need for Socialism"—unofficially it is "what the Party wants to say to those outside the Party". The unofficial definition is preferable, because it makes it easier to see that the S.S. is the product of certain definite conditions, influenced by tradition and (to a lesser degree) by particular editorial policy.

Now, what do members want to say to outsiders via the S.S.? Many answers are possible, but none seems to meet with full agreement among members. We may know that Comrade X wants to say this, and that

Y wants to say that. But with the Party as a whole it can't be so clear-cut. The Party can't tell its members what they want to say—all it can do is to tell them what (in the best interests of the Party) they shall NOT say. No member shall write in the S.S. statements which conflict with the Party case or which are the subject of controversy among members.

If it is thought desirable that the S.S. should assume that readers have no knowledge of the socialist case, then it is logical that no mention of anti-socialist arguments or

internal controversy should be made. But if you are trying to get people interested in Socialism, then you've got to be positive—and this is where the S.S. falls down. The S.S. is like a certain type of speaker who wants questions to enable him to develop his case, but who precludes them by being negative. In fact, taken as a whole, the S.S. is (unfortunately) not for those who know nothing of the SPGB case—it is for those who know a little and want it confirmed or elaborated. It is also for such as the non-socialist regular reader for 25 years who finds in it useful information to dish the C.P'ers.

* * *

There is no doubt that the Party should publish a journal for newcomers to socialist ideas. But I don't agree with the ways in which some members think this can be achieved, e.g. by using simpler language, avoiding theoretical articles, etc. There is no simple solution to the problem of how to get and keep new readers of the S.S., but it might help if we allowed ourselves to be more positive in explaining what Socialism is. True, practically everything that is positive about Socialism is controversial and therefore taboo in the S.S. At present, no statement appears which could be the subject of dispute among members. But do we not needlessly hamstring our writers and limit our readership by an over-eagerness to speak with one voice about everything?

The attempt to have 100% of what is written in the S.S. agreed upon by 100% of the membership is bad for this reason: it artificially fragments socialist ideas into propaganda (to go outside) and controversy (to remain inside). In "Forum", controversy is cut off from its source and pushed out of the main arena (where it should be part of the act) into the side-show (where it makes an exhibition of itself, in the worst sense).

A wider concept of the function of the S.S. would save members from thinking in terms of a separate internal journal. If, in the course of a genuine attempt to get across

NATIONAL SERVICE ACT

Peter Berry, Kingston Branch, was sentenced at Kingston to three months imprisonment for refusing to undertake a medical examination for service under the National Service Act. He had previously appeared before the local Tribunal at Fulham and was struck off the Objector's register. His subsequent appeal was unsuccessful.

socialist ideas to others, a member says "there won't be any mass production under Socialism" why ban this from the S.S. just because some members (including myself) disagree? The member holds that view and he is a socialist. We don't know what makes people socialists—there are so many factors involved. So why not try to find as many points of contact with people as possible and try to touch as many aspects of their lives as possible?

* * *

If the S.S. incorporated articles which expressed the personal point of view of the writers (not, of course, out of proportion to the official view) then this would encourage correspondence from non-members. Just as a meeting needs a questioner, so a journal needs a correspondence column. At present the S.S. gets virtually no correspondence because it is too impersonal, though this impersonality has nothing to do with signing your name at the end—it consists in the whole approach to the reader. The occasional letter that does get into Standard is not from a reader interested in Socialism and wanting to know more, but from one who is "needled" into an attack. Perhaps this is because opponents are, on the whole, catered for rather better than sympathisers.

Were the S.S. to be "opened up" along the lines I have suggested, there is no need to fear that members would abuse the right of free expression to grind their own axes. They would be conscious (or at least the Ed. Comm. would) that their remarks would have to be significant to socialists and non-socialists alike.

Another thing that should be discussed is the way the S.S. is printed. Are members satisfied with its present appearance? From what I have heard, they are not—when they give the matter any thought. Chief complaints centre around its parish-magazine look. There is little excuse for the all-too-frequent "sea" of unbroken type on a page, nor for the unimaginative headings. The Election Special, by comparison, was much more interesting to read. It contained mostly the same stuff as the S.S. yet it contrived to look arresting, urgent, *alive*. Perhaps members have got so used to the present look of the S.S. that they take it for granted—yet have a look at it when it is displayed in a newsagent's alongside all the other papers. Need it look, at first glance, so much like the "Undertakers' Gazette?"

It seems to me that there is quite a lot of scope for improving the circulation of the S.S. by making it more attractive to new readers. My suggestion is to make it a 4 page newspaper (double the Election Special), without altering its present number of words. Cut the price to 3d. and print 8,000 copies. A sale of this number—surely it is possible if we really try?—at an average price of 2½d would bring in £83 6s. 8d.; more than enough to pay for the printing. Spend part of the £20 a month that we now lose on the S.S. on publicity, and I am confident that we could soon exceed a sale of 10,000 copies a month—enough to enable us to start seriously thinking about a fortnightly journal.

S.R.P.

CANVASSING

Canvassing is one of the activities of members which deserves more attention than it usually gets. Other propaganda activities, such as speaking on the platform and writing in Party literature, are subject of discussion among members, so that shortcomings are made apparent and techniques improved. But when the individual member goes out "on the knocker" he is left to his own resources to make the best impression he can.

During the recent by-election campaign in N. Paddington, for example, the members who went canvassing had three objects:—

1. To talk to people about the policy of the S.P.G.B.
2. To get them to come to our meetings.
3. To sell our literature.

There is reason to suppose that some members who engaged in this activity experienced difficulty in handling the situations in which they found themselves. Yet the fact that other members are able to do very useful work regularly in this direction indicates that the technique of canvassing is something that can be *learned*.

Members should seize an early opportunity of discussing this question in their branches, with a view to organising an exchange of ideas between canvassers and encouraging other members to undertake this activity. They can benefit from hearing how others face and overcome the difficulties that canvassing (and personal propaganda generally) presents.

A CANVASSING ORGANISER.